

Topsfield Planning Board
Informational Meeting for 2008 Zoning Amendments
February 25, 2008

Chairman Morrison called the informational meeting to order at 8:00 PM. Board members present were Martha Morrison, Gregor Smith and Robert Winship. Roberta Knight, Community Development Coordinator was also present.

Visitors: Interested residents, Town officials, and commercial property owners. Please refer to list of attendees.

Chairman Morrison opened the meeting with introductory remarks concerning the process and basic premises used by the Planning Board and Master Planning Committee concerning the proposed zoning amendments for action at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting. The creation of a new zoning district to be known as "Business District Highway North" was based on the Town's experience with zoning and legal issues surrounding the development of 367 Boston Street, the site of the new Dunkin Donuts. The commercial lots surrounding Dunkin Donuts along Route 1 are all non-conforming lots. The experience concerning the development of the Dunkin Donut's site showed that having non-conforming lots does not protect the area from future and possibly unwanted development. The 367 Boston Street site turned out in the end to be acceptable to the Town only due to the fact that at this time there is a very capable and strong Zoning Board of Appeals and that the developer was very cooperative.

Ms. Morrison also noted that since the original notice was sent to area property owners within a half mile radius of the Route 1 and Ipswich Road intersection the configuration has been modified by the Planning Board. Ms. Morrison referred to the overhead map and the handout. The modification was based on input from abutters to various proposed lots for the district. As such, the Planning Board has taken out lots located at 107 Ipswich Road, 125 and 126 Ipswich Road. Regardless of whether 107 Ipswich Road is in or out of the district, the use as an auto repair shop remains a non-conforming use. These three lots on Ipswich Road will remain non-conforming and provide a buffer to the residential abutting lots. Upon the request of the trustee, the lot at 377 Boston Street has been included; however, only the area in the front on the lot inclusive of the footprint of the house and garage is included. The back section abutting residential properties will remain in the IRA and provide a buffer for the abutting residential lots.

At this time, member Gregor Smith reviewed "Why create a Business District Highway North?" He stated that the overall goal in creating a new Business District Highway North at the intersection of Route 1 and Ipswich Road is to provide the community with some control over how the lots in the neighborhood may be developed in the future. There are two primary issues to consider:

1. Bringing the existing properties in the neighborhood into conformity, and
2. Developing appropriate standards to guide future development

Refer to attached handout for detailed information.

The concerns raised by the residents were as follows:

- Inclusion of undeveloped lot at 382 Boston Street next to Empire Clothing on Route 1
- Type of development and uses for 362 Boston Street which is a residential house in the triangle
- Restaurant use relative to restaurant chains such as McDonalds selling fast foods

Chairman Morrison stated that the Planning Board has noted the stated concerns and reminded attendees that the public hearing on these zoning amendments is scheduled for Tuesday, April 1 at 8:00PM in the Town Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight
Community Development Coordinator